

Gabrielle Graves

Podcast Script

Dr. Ransom

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School violence is becoming a major problem in many schools throughout the nation. Fighting is at an all time high. With heightened media attention on all school related issues, administrators and teachers alike need to worry about what they can do to help keep their schools safe...Social media and technology can now create national news with the click of a button. Sites like youtube and facebook can spread video instantly across the web.

According to the constitutional rights foundation, “the threat of attacks in schools can create fear and disorder among students and teachers. According to a study conducted in 1995, 34 percent of middle school students and 20 percent of high school students admitted that they feared becoming victims of school violence. Eight percent of teachers say they are threatened with violence at school on an average of once a month. Two percent report being physically attacked each year. In a single school year in New York City, 3,984 teachers reported violent crimes against them.”

In 2005 in North Carolina, over 78% of School Resource officers attending the National association of school resource officers attested that they had taken a weapon from a student on school property. Last year as a teacher, I found three students with knives in my classroom on three separate occasions. As recent as March 14, 2011, The Brockport

Central School District was on lockdown mode early in the afternoon, after a text message threat was received by a student in the District.

The roots of school violence cannot necessarily be pinpointed; however, media violence may be a good indicator as to the more violent disruptions in schools across the country.

Did you know...by the time the average child is eighteen years old, they will have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence and 16,000 murders. Media violence is especially damaging to young children (under 8) because they cannot easily tell the difference between real life and fantasy.

The level of violence during Saturday morning cartoons is higher than the level of violence during prime time. There are 3-5 violent acts per hour in prime time, versus 20-25 acts per hour on Saturday morning.

While this may or not be a direct cause of increased aggression in today's children, psychologists have conducted studies, which show increased levels of aggression in children who watch more television. Subsequently, Tom Robinson, MD, the assistant professor of pediatrics and of Medicine at Stanford concludes, reducing the amount of time that grade-school children spend watching television and playing video games can make them less aggressive toward their peers.

The statistics are endless when it comes to the exposure of violence to teens and children today. Accessibility in today's day in age to tools are endless. The internet and other technology provides children to access any information they seek at their fingertips.

While, Race, ethnicity, income levels, and other measurable elements have often been singled out by public health experts as risk factors that can contribute to anti-social behavior, from smoking and drinking to violent behavior and suicide.

However, according to a 2001 survey of U.S. adolescents conducted at the University of Minnesota and published in the *American Journal of Public Health* (Vol. 90, No. 12) these measurable factors only partially explain adolescent health risk behaviors.

What can we do?

Look into creating programs within your school or community to assist in diffusing a violent situation.

For example, think about creating a conflict resolution program. This teaches kids to communicate prior to having an incident erupt. This program allows for children to see the “other side” of the situation and it allows them to develop a broad range of coping and communication skills.

Peer mediation is also another effective way to allow students to communicate with one another, by having an impartial third party mediate the situation. This model again allows for students to work through their misunderstandings and move forward by developing better communication skills.

Some other programs are gun violence education and crime prevention and law related education programs.

Be proactive in getting your school to reduce it's violence and create a safe learning environment for students and teachers alike.